

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Lead-Deadwood School District Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2006-2007

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Dates of On Site Visit: October 3rd and 4th, 2006

Date of Report: November 9, 2006

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Needs Assistance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Data table A
- Data table C
- Data table D
- Child find/screening newspaper ads
- Part B application

- Preschool screening data
- Comprehensive plan
- Staff surveys
- Parent surveys
- File reviews
- NCLB district report cards (2003, 04, 05, & 06)

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district's has procedures in place to meet the requirements of child find and referral. There are no private schools in the district. Individual education programs (IEP) and placement procedures are followed when placing students out of district. Data indicates that students with disabilities are increasing or are commensurate with non-disabled students in graduation and drop out rates. The district has not suspended or expelled any special education students. The district has procedures to determine professional development for personnel.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded parent and teacher surveys indicate a need for more involvement and input into the personnel development process.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The Lead -Deadwood School District provides an after-school program for kindergarten through fifth grade students. No child is denied access to the program. The three (3) hour structured program includes time for an after school snack, play, homework, and a choice between the craft or computer activity on a daily basis. A monthly activity calendar is sent home to inform families of the activity scheduled for each day. The program also offers special six week sessions. Past sessions have included French lessons, ballet, cooking, gymnastics, field trips, and tumbling. The district after-school program is in its second year of service and is being utilized by twice as many students as last year. Staff includes two full-time employees and a part-time high school student.

Senior Projects

This is an opportunity for all senior students to select an area they are interested in and conduct a study. They must complete an 8-10 page report, do a portfolio, create a product and produce a presentation that incorporates the previous information. To complete this project they will need to find an advisor (someone who works in the school) and a mentor (someone from the community). For example, a special education student might build a dirt bike ramp for his pick-up. His advisor will keep track of everything he is doing, as a mentor welder. His classroom teacher will guide him through the writing, portfolio, and presentation process. When the student has completed his work he will present his information and product to a group of teachers and community members. This promising practice allows teachers to see other strengths that the students have.

Outlaw Ranch

All six grade students travel to Outlaw Ranch for three days and two nights to experience the outdoors and get to know their classmates and teachers better. During their time at the ranch, students may horseback ride, canoe, participate in team building activities, bug hunt, blacksmith, create plays and play games. All the sixth grade teachers attend this as well as the parents. It is a great experience for teachers and students, as they learn about each other in a different setting.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under general supervision as identified by the steering committee.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Part B application
- Parent surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- State table I
- Part C data
- File review

Promising practice

The steering committee concluded the district has not suspended or expelled any children with disabilities.

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded that children with disabilities in the Lead-Deadwood School District receive FAPE birth through age 21.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The monitoring team concluded that the district meets the requirements regarding the suspension and/or expulsion of students.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under free appropriate public education as identified by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Prior Notice Form
- File Reviews
- Evaluations
- Teacher Surveys
- Comprehensive Plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district provides appropriate written notice and obtains informed consent before assessments are administered to a child as part of an evaluation or reevaluation. The evaluation or reevaluation procedures and instruments meet the minimum requirements. The district ensures proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process.

Needs improvement

The steering committee determined the district needs to establish a process of evaluations prior to dismissal from special education services that can be documented, other than parent request.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under appropriate evaluation as identified by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

Through interview and a review of student records the team could not validate the district dismissal process as an area in need of improvement. It is considered to meet requirements.

Needs Assistance

CFR 300.304 Evaluation procedures.

(b) Conduct of evaluation. In conducting the evaluation, the public agency must:

(1) Use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental and academic information about the child including information provided by the parent.

Through a review of student records 14, 21 and 22 at the middle school/high school level, functional assessment was insufficient to address the relevant functional, developmental and academic needs of the students. Through interview, staff was unsure of how to conduct functional assessment or what they could use to determine the skills needed by the student to advance in the general curriculum. Due to the lack of sufficient functional assessment data, the present levels of performance did not reflect specific strengths and needs based upon the skill area affected by the disability.

ARSD 24:05:24:02. Duties of a district after referral.

Upon receiving a referral the school district shall conduct an informal review or may proceed with the evaluation process. An informal review includes a conference, if appropriate and necessary, either in person or by telephone, with the person making the referral and a review of the student's school record.

CFR 300.304 Evaluation procedures

(c) Other evaluation procedures.

(4) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program. Each student's individualized education program shall include:

- (a) Meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum; and
- (b) Meeting each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability;

Through file review and interview, the monitoring team concluded the district's procedures from informal review, through evaluation and development of the IEP did not consistently address the student's areas of potential disability. The district did not consistently address all the identified needs of the students, beginning with the referral through to the development of the students program. This resulted in areas affected by the student's disability that were left unaddressed by the IEP team. Examples of what the team found are as follows:

Student #1: The referral, informal review and evaluation showed evidence of behavioral concern. Scores from the behavior evaluation suggest clinically significant emotional issues however the IEP team determined the student to be eligible under the category of specific learning disabilities. The IEP did not contain a program or goals to address the student's behavior.

Student #4: The referral, informal review and evaluation showed evidence of behavioral concern. The students program did not address the issues related to the student's behavior.

Student #9: The student was referred for issues concerning written language, reading and attention. The issue of attention did not appear to be addressed during the evaluation. The student was determined eligible in the areas of written

language and reading. The only skill area affected by the disability addressed in the IEP was written language.

Student #10: An IEP written for this student in February of 2006 included parental concerns regarding behavior and the student's attitude. This was appropriately addressed in the student's IEP goals. In March of 2006 the three year reevaluation was completed. The reevaluation did not include all areas of suspected disability since behavior was not addressed as part of the evaluation or included in the student's IEP.

Student #23: An IEP written for this student in April of 2006 included parental concerns regarding the student's behavior. The student's reevaluation is currently being conducted and the issue of behavior has not been addressed in the evaluation process.

Student #18: The 2004 multidisciplinary team written report/eligibility document for this student indicated this student was eligible under the category of specific learning disabilities. This student moved to another district and was identified as emotionally disturbed. The student has now moved back to the Lead-Deadwood School district. There is no evaluation data in this student's file to support the disability category of emotionally disturbed.

Student #13: This student has two separate IEPs. One IEP reflects their speech/language needs and the other IEP describes the special education program. All services must be documented in one IEP.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Parental rights document
- Parent surveys
- Access logs
- File reviews
- Comprehensive plan
- FERPA publication documentation

Promising practice

The steering committee concluded the district has not had a complaint or request for due process hearing for at least the last 28 years.

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded parents are informed of their parental rights under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Parents are fully informed, in their native language or another mode of communication (if necessary), of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought.

The district ensures the rights of a child are protected if no parent can be identified and that parents are provided the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The monitoring could not validate the lack of a complaint or due process hearing as an area of promising practice since this reflects the districts ability to meet the regulatory requirements of IDEA.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under procedural safeguards as identified by the steering committee.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- File reviews
- Prior notice forms
- Parent surveys
- Parental rights
- Student surveys
- Parent surveys
- Teacher IEP input form

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district ensures written notice is provided for all IEP meetings, and includes all required content. IEPs contain all required content and transition plans for students are a coordinated set of activities, reflecting student strengths and interests to prepare them for post school activities. The district has policies and procedures in place to ensure an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded the district needs to develop a strategy for parents so they are aware of the expectations being set for their child.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under individual education program as identified by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team could not validate the need to develop parent awareness of student expectations as an area in need of improvement as this is not governed by regulation.

Needs Assistance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program (IEP)

A student's IEP must contain a statement of the student's special education and related services provided to the student. The student's IEP must also indicate the location of those services.

CFR 300.320 (a)(7) Comment Initiation, Frequency, Location and Duration of Services

What is required is that the IEP include information about the amount of services that will be provided to the child, so that the level of the agency's commitment of resources will be clear to parents and other IEP Team members. The amount of time to be committed to each the various services to be provided must be appropriate to the specific service and clearly state in the IEP in a manner that can be understood by all involved into the development and implementation the IEP.

Through interview and a review of student records 1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 16, 19, 20, 24 and 25 the monitoring team concluded the district did not specifically state the various services to be provided or the specific services to be provided in the IEP. The IEPs simply stated "special education services" along with a total amount of time and location.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- File reviews
- State table F
- Teacher surveys

Promising practice

The steering committee concluded the district's level of including students with disabilities with non-disabled peers exceeds the state average and provides the necessary supports to have a successful program.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The percentage of students with disabilities educated in the regular education setting indicates that the district continues to educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with modifications. Special educators and general educators teach as a team in the regular classroom setting. Paraprofessionals are employed to ensure that more severely disabled students are in the regular classroom accessing the general curriculum. The Boys Town Reading Program is an intensive reading program utilized to assist borderline students to become successful readers and remain in the regular classroom setting.

The Lead/Deadwood school system utilizes an exemplary approach to physical education and lifelong recreation training. The PE classes involve the students in bike riding, skiing and fly fishing. Students of all abilities are included in these activities. The district also provides an adaptive swim program for students with disabilities. These students receive swim training two days a week during the school year and three times a week during the summer for those who wish to participate. The district provides transportation to and from the YMCA for these lessons and also provides assistants with the students to allow for a small student to adult ratio. These and other activities resulted in the Lead-Deadwood Middle School receiving the Governor's "Healthy School Award".

Meets Requirement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under least restrictive environment as identified by the steering committee.